

School of Theology at Claremont



1001 1332154

SERMON

REV. DR. TAYLOR

BV
2075
T64



The Library

SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT

WEST FOOTHILL AT COLLEGE AVENUE
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA

REV. DR. TAYLOR'S

SERMON

BEFORE THE

American Board of Commissioners for

Foreign Missions,

AT THE

ANNUAL MEETING IN HARTFORD, CONN.

OCTOBER 3, 1876.

BV
2075
A64

*THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON HUMAN
INSTITUTIONS AND OCCUPATIONS.*

A SERMON

PREACHED AT THE

SIXTY-SEVENTH ANNUAL MEETING

OF THE

AMERICAN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
FOR FOREIGN MISSIONS.

HARTFORD, OCT. 3, 1876.

BY

WILLIAM M. TAYLOR, D. D.

OF NEW YORK.

BOSTON:

PRINTED BY THOMAS TODD, CONGREGATIONAL HOUSE,

1876.

Theology Library
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY
AT CLAREMONT
California

SERMON.

And everything shall live, whither the river cometh. — EZEK. XLVII: 9.

THE vision to the description of which these words belong, is one of the most striking of those which were vouchsafed to the captive seer by the river of Chebar. It was designed to represent the nature, origin, progress and results of the Gospel, and, thus regarded, it suggests many important matters for consideration. Thus, it is a vision of waters, and that symbolizes the fertilizing as well as purifying influence which the religion of Christ has everywhere exerted. Then, it is a vision of waters issuing from the Temple of God; and that reminds us that the Gospel is no mere human expedient, but is indeed the revelation of God's mercy to mankind. Farther, it is a vision of waters flowing out from under the altar of the House of God, and we have thereby recalled to our remembrance the truth, that men are redeemed and regenerated only through their acceptance of that deliverance which Christ wrought out for them, by the sacrifice of Himself on their behalf. Ancient fable tells of a great hero that when he died, the spot on which he fell was marked by the outgushing from it of a perennial fountain; but that old story was only a kind of poetic parable of the true, for when Jesus died, there sprang from beneath the altar on which He suffered, a river whose streams are yet to make glad all the nations of the earth.

Once more, this is a vision of waters gradually rising. They grew deeper the longer they flowed. First they were to the ankles; then to the knees; then to the loins; then "waters to swim in, a river that could not be passed over." Now that illustrates the progress of the Gospel over the world. It was not to take sudden and immediate possession of the earth, but rather to flow over it as the tide flows over the shore. That is a view of the case which may relieve the depression that weighs down our hearts when we think of the, comparatively speaking, tardy ad-

vancement which the Gospel has as yet made among men. One wave bears but a small proportion to the full tide, and for anything we know, the past eighteen centuries may be no more than so many separate waves in that steadily-rising tide which is yet to cover the earth, for "one day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." In any case, if at the present moment the waters be even "to the ankles," that, especially when taken in connection with the cumulative force of other proofs, is an assurance that the time is coming when they shall be "waters to swim in, a great river that cannot be passed over."

Such are some of the leading features of this vision, with the instructions which they analogically convey to us concerning the Gospel of Christ. But I do not dwell longer on them now, because I have chosen my text, not so much with a view to these truths — important though they be — as for the purpose of bringing before our minds one aspect of the effect of Christianity upon the world, which is not so frequently looked at as it ought to be. You will observe that the words which I have selected refer not so much to the main spiritual blessings which the Gospel brings to those who believingly receive it, as to the accessory and incidental advantages which accompany its presence wherever "free course" is given to its proclamation; not so much in the phraseology of the vision itself to the life which it maintains in those creatures which have their being in the river, as to the verdure and variety of the vegetation which everywhere lines its banks. It is true that the religion of Christ meets and satisfies the needs of the individual man. It comes to him with pardon for his guilt, purity for his pollution, rest for his anxiety, and hope for his despair. It reveals to him at once the majesty and the mercy, the justice and the grace, of that God with whom he has to do. It shows him "the righteousness of God — that he is just and yet the justifier of him that believeth." It gives him a solace in sorrow, a staff in weakness, and a hope in death. These are truths which we must never allow to be eclipsed, and, therefore, though my design is to deal with another department of the subject, I have been careful to set them thus clearly before you, lest you should imagine either that I have forgotten, or that I undervalue them. But without dwelling longer on them now, let me proceed to my special theme, which I may announce as THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON HUMAN INSTITUTIONS AND OCCU-

PATIONS, OR THE INDIRECT EFFECTS OF THE GOSPEL ON THE RELATIONSHIPS AND PURSUITS OF MEN.

I. Take it, in the first place, in its bearing ON MEN'S SOCIAL CONDITION. And here I go at once to the household. The family is the centre of human society. We cannot look upon mankind as merely a multitude of units. None of us stands completely by himself, for each of us is born into a little circle already existing. As Maurice has said, "Our relation to father and mother is the primary fact of our existence, so that we can contemplate no facts apart from that." The family is the earliest school at which we are placed; and the lessons which we receive in the household, the examples which are there set before us, above all, perhaps, the influences to which we are there subjected and by which we are unconsciously affected, have more to do with our after history as individuals, and with the future character of the community to which we belong, than we can possibly estimate. "Home is the head of the river," and an influence, whether blessed or pernicious, exerted there, will affect all its after course.

Now, it is capable of the clearest proof that Christianity is the only thing that has given purity and loveliness to the household. Indeed, in its true ideal, the family may be said to have been virtually the creation of Christianity, for in Rome, which was the heir of the civilization of the ages, and in which it is commonly conceded that men had attained the highest degree of refinement which has been reached without revelation, there was little home life worthy of the name. The words of a living English theologian on this point are not more dreadful than true:* "Familia to the ear of a Roman meant, a multitude of idle, corrupt, and corrupting slaves, kept in subjection by the cross and the ergastulum, ready for every treachery and reeking with every vice. It meant a despot who could kill his slaves when they were aged, and expose his children when they were born; it meant matrons among whom virtue was rare, divorces frequent, remarriage easy, and who from no motive stronger than that of vanity would sacrifice the lives of their infants yet unborn; it meant children, spectators from their infancy of insolence, cruelty, servility and sin." This being the case, even in Rome, we need not wonder at the state of things that existed, and does yet largely exist, in

* Farrar's Witness of Christianity to Christ, p. 182.

heathen lands. Wherever the Gospel has not gone woman has been degraded into a slave, and ground down beneath the galling tyranny of her husband. The barbarian of the east and the savage of the west have been alike in that, they have driven the weakest to the wall, and she who was designed to be a helpmeet of her companion, sharing his cares, doubling his joys, and throwing a halo for him round his home, has been trampled under the hoof of cruelty, and branded with the scars of violence. Then as to the little children, who shall tell us how many holocausts of victims infanticide has burned upon its altars! While as regards the aged, it would be impossible to reckon the number of them who have been left to starve in the desert, or to perish by the river side.

I may be told, indeed, that such things as these are not quite unknown among ourselves. I may be reminded of the brutality of drunken husbands, and the cold-heartedness of children to their parents, of which we have the records occasionally in our public prints. But the cases are not parallel. That which is the rule in pagan lands is the exception here. That which among the heathen is nothing accounted of, is here viewed with abhorrence and regarded as a crime.

Now, how shall we account for the difference? I answer, Simply by the influence of the Gospel of Christ. The Lord Jesus has revolutionized, if not created, family life. He gave sanctity to the marriage tie by reënacting the primal law, that one man should be the husband of one wife. He restored woman to her true position as the helpmeet and companion of her husband. He took the little children in His arms and blessed them, for that touching scene in the Gospel narrative is only a type of the work in which He is still engaged wheresoever His message of love is proclaimed. By His tender care for His venerable mother in the very climax and crisis of His own agony, He gave a sacredness to old age which has gathered to it ever since the reverence, the affection and the benevolence of men. The chivalry of mediæval knighthood and the gallantry of modern politeness have alike their roots in the religion of Jesus; while for everything of "sweetness and light," of happiness and purity that there is enshrined for us in the word home, we are beholden to the Gospel.

Not by any sudden and violent upheaval, indeed, was this change effected. Had that been the case, the world would have

been more conscious of its obligation to the Lord in this matter. But silently, gently, almost imperceptibly, the influence of Christianity filtered into the family, and there, touching the very mainspring of our human life, it quickened and ennobled society at large. "What women these Christians have!" said a pagan orator of the second century, with a true perception of the influence of the Gospel on them, for the religion of Jesus gave dignity to womanhood and holiness to motherhood, and thereby it raised the whole tone and character of the household. My sisters! have you not in all this a special interest, and do you not feel, in this fact, a special motive urging you to labor and to pray for the purification and elevation of the homes of heathenism? And you too, my brothers, who have so largely profited by this social regeneration, have you not in that a peculiar reason why you should seek to spread abroad that Gospel to which in your households you owe so much?

But not to dwell longer on the domestic influence of Christianity, let me direct attention for a moment to the effect which the religion of Jesus has had in promoting kindness between man and man. Few things strike the student of ancient history more painfully than the indifference to human life which seems to have prevailed in all pagan lands. The pages of classical authors are continually stained by the record of some deed of cruelty. But lest I should be suspected of exaggerating this evil in order to make out a better case, let me give you one or two quotations from one who will not be charged with speaking under any particular prejudice upon the subject. In his introduction to his little volume on the Commentaries of Julius Cæsar,* Anthony Trollope has said: "The cruelties of Marius as an old man and of Augustus as a young one were so astounding as, even at this distance, to horrify the reader, though he remember that Christianity had not yet softened men's hearts. Marius, the old man, almost swam in the blood of his enemies, as did also his rival Sulla; but the young Octavius, he whom the gods favored so long as the almost divine Augustus, cemented his throne with the blood of his friends." Again he says: "That which will most strike the ordinary English reader in the narrative of Cæsar is the cruelty of the Romans—cruelty of which Cæsar himself is guilty to a frightful extent, and of which he never ex-

* Pp. 10, 24, 27.

presses horror." Once more, after giving an account of the deaths, mostly by violence, of the greater number of those whose names are mentioned in Cæsar's writings, he goes on to say: "The bloody catalogue is so complete, so nearly comprises all whose names are mentioned, that it strikes the reader with almost a comic horror. But when we come to the slaughter of whole towns; to the devastation of country effected purposely that men and women might starve; to the abandonment of the old, the young, and the tender, that they might perish on the hillsides; to the mutilation of crowds of men; to the burning of cities told us in a passing word; to the drowning of many thousands—mentioned as we should mention the destruction of a brood of rats—the comedy is all over, and the heart becomes sick. Then it is we remember that the coming of Christ has changed all things, and that men now—though terrible things have been done since Christ came to us—are not as men were in the days of Cæsar." To this terrible passage nothing needs to be added. I may only remind you, that in ancient Rome, while there were buildings where murder was perpetrated to give zest to the sports of a holiday, there was not a single edifice devoted to such purposes of benevolence as those to which our modern hospitals are consecrated. What a contrast is presented here between that picture of Gerome, now on exhibition in New York, which portrays the gladiatorial fight in the crowded amphitheatre, and that other, by an English artist, which depicts the nurse in the hospital at Scutari! In the former, you have in the sickening foreground the two combatants. One has overcome the other, and with his uplifted sword is waiting for directions. The wounded slave has turned his eye, with agonizing earnestness, upon the emperor, pleading for his life, and even his conqueror seems almost to join him in his mute appeal. But the vestal virgins, each with her thumb turned downwards, are voting for his destruction, and he on whose nod a human destiny is at the moment hanging, has so little concern upon the matter that his whole attention seems to be given to the fresh fig that he is eating; while on the benches round and round, the multitudes are enjoying the spectacle as the great feature of their holiday festivities. Let that stand for a specimen of man's inhumanity to man. And now look on this other scene. An hospital ward, with sick and wounded men, lying on comfortable couches, a clock upon the wall whose fingers point to an hour past midnight; and in

the forefront a gentle woman, with a lamp in her hand, passing from bed to bed, all unconscious that the rough soldier behind her has risen on his elbow to kiss her shadow on the wall as she goes by. Let that stand for a specimen of holiest benevolence. Now what has made the difference between these two? I answer, the life, death, resurrection, and influence of Him who said, "He that will be greatest among you, let him be your servant, even as the son of man came not to be ministered unto but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." Thus on the banks of the river of Christianity, domestic happiness and practical benevolence do flourish in vigorous and attractive life, and if we wish to make other nations sharers with us in these priceless blessings, we must send them that Gospel out of which among us they have sprung.

II. But look, in the second place, at THE INFLUENCE OF THE GOSPEL UPON CIVIL LIBERTY. It has been alleged that the Bible is the enemy of freedom, but they who so speak "know neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." They reason from that abnormal state of things which existed when the priesthood of an apostate church rode rough-shod over the liberties of men, but they are willfully blind to the condition of affairs in the world at the present time. Take the map of the globe, and ask what those countries are which have the fullest measure of civil and religious freedom, and you will find that they are those in which the Gospel of Christ is most widely known, most generally believed, and most commonly obeyed. What has made this nation? How comes it that we have here such a measure of liberty as to make us the envy of the world? and by what mighty influence did the country rid itself of that terrible inconsistency which, while proclaiming the equality of all men by birth, did yet hold property in the persons of others? Without fear of contradiction, I reply that we owe these things to the leavening and pervasive influence of Christianity among us. The Bible indeed contains no treatise on civil government, but its principles lay the axe to the root of every form of despotism. Jesus has taught us not only to assert freedom of conscience for ourselves, but to respect and defend the exercise of that liberty by others. He has commanded us to "honor all men," because they wear that nature which He consecrated by His incarnation; and wherever the mystery of His cross is even dimly understood, men are disposed, while receiving its salvation, to sacrifice them-

selves for others' good. Hence the whole spirit of Christianity stimulates men to look not only on their own things, but also on the things of others; and that is the disposition out of which true liberty is born. See how all this is established by the history of the Protestant Reformation. Wherever in the sixteenth century the Gospel found a foothold in Europe, it cleared forth with for liberty also a place of asylum, which by and by became the headquarters of propagandist activity in its behalf. The name of Geneva is as prominent in the history of the progress of European liberty as it is in that of religious reformation; while, on the other hand, the nations which in those days stamped out the incipient workings of spiritual reform, are those whose histories since that time have been darkest with despotism, or reddest with the blood of ceaselessly recurring revolutions. John Milton was right when he said of the authors of the New Testament, that they were

“Men divinely taught, and better teaching
The solid rules of civil government,
In their majestic, unaffected style,
Than all the orators of Greece and Rome.
In them is plainest taught, and easiest learnt,
What makes a nation happy, and keeps it so;
What ruins kingdoms, and lays cities flat.”

The Gospel is the true conservative influence in the land, while at the same time it has that in it which stirs up to the noblest progress, and makes it safe for the people to go forward. In the possession of this great blessing it is that we differ from the great majority of the republics that have gone before us, and if we would not follow them in their gradual decline, first into despotism and afterwards into destruction, we must seek to bring the millions of our people more thoroughly under its power. Nay, more; if we would make other nations happy in the possession of these blessings, we should send to them this precious boon. When we see France anxiously working out for herself the problem of “government for the people and by the people,” let us send her, in return for that Centennial Pharos which is to light up our national harbor, the true light-bringer, the Word of God, that she may know the source from which our liberty has sprung, and the influence by which it is preserved. When we see Spain, after having come forth awhile into the ocean of free-

dom, timidly creeping back into the creek where she must lie again under the heavily shotted guns of tyranny, let us beckon her onward, and send to her this divine compass by which she may be able to steer her course to safety. When we see China and Japan awakening from the slumber which for so many centuries had chloroformed their activities, let us give to them the Gospel of the Lord Jesus, that in the study of its principles they may educate themselves into advancement. Yea, wheresoever oppression rules and despotism holds sway, let us seek to introduce the Word of God. That is the great emancipator from every sort of bondage, and when men know its truth, they "shall be free indeed."

III. But look, in the third place, AT THE DEPARTMENT OF LITERATURE, and you will see how, when the river of the Gospel has flowed into a nation, it has quickened that also into richer growth. Take here the stores which have been garnered up in our own mother tongue, and when you come to look into the subject you will be surprised to discover how much the Word of God has had to do with the character and quality of English literature. Up till the time when John Wicliffe sent his "poor priests" up and down England with his version of portions of the Scriptures in the vulgar tongue, there could not be said to be any English literature, and there was hardly any English language. Just at the very time when Wicliffe was engaged in his great work—now precisely five hundred years ago—Geoffrey Chaucer was writing those Canterbury Tales which have charmed so many generations of readers, and which bear on them certain indications that their author had come under the widening and ennobling influence of the truths which the parson of Lutterworth proclaimed. Nor was this in itself unlikely, for both of these men were protégés of him whom we know in another connection as "Old John of Gaunt time-honored Lancaster." In any case these two between them laid the foundation of our language and literature; but as from the nature of the case the Bible went into more homes and hearts than Chaucer reached, we must attribute to Wicliffe the principal share in that literary revival which the succeeding centuries witnessed in the mother country. Nay, it is somewhat remarkable that just as Chaucer's poems were contemporaneous with Wicliffe's Bible, so the age of the Reformation under Henry, Edward and Elizabeth, the day that is of Tyndale's, Matthews', Cover-

dale's and the Genevan Bibles, has always been regarded as the palmiest time of English literature; while, again, the age which saw Wordsworth, Coleridge, Scott, Southey, and that whole band which made the early part of this century so renowned, was the successor and the inheritor of that in which Wesley, Whitefield, and their fellow-evangelists had carried religious revival over England and America. In more recent days, Macaulay came out of the Clapham sect; Carlyle learned his volcanic earnestness in the most intensely spiritual of the Scottish denominations; and Tennyson has but sung to his matchless music the truths which his friend Maurice and he had learned together from the Word of God as interpreted by their age.

Read over again that paper of rare wisdom and still rarer wit, in the *Eclipse of Faith*, entitled "The Blank Bible," and you will be astonished at the extent to which, as there indicated, the influence of the Bible has gone into our literature. Avowedly religious writers, of course, have been indebted to it for their all; but even those who have had no directly spiritual aim have been largely beholden to its quickening power. Take from Shakespeare those passages of his writings which have been suggested or colored by the Word of God, and you rob him of some of the greenest leaves in his laurel crown. But for the Bible the "Paradise Lost" of Milton might have been little better than an echo of Homer, and the "Paradise Regained" would have remained among "things unattempted yet in prose or rhyme." But for it where would have been the "Pilgrim" of John Bunyan, the "Task" of William Cowper, and the finest passages of Wordsworth's "Excursion?" Without it we might have had the passionate and misanthropic shriekings of Byron, but we could not have had the sweet music of his Hebrew melodies. Without it we might have had some of the songs of Burns, and perhaps also some of his patriotic odes, but the world would never have seen that gem of his genius, the "Cotter's Saturday Night." Without it we might have had the weird mysticism of Poe, but we could not have possessed some of the sweet lyrics of Whittier and Longfellow. But what need I more? Take the Bible out of our literature and you not only rob it of its glory, but you destroy it altogether, for if in the years of the past it has seemed to be like a tree bringing forth its fruit in its season, and having leaves for the healing of the nation, the reason has been because it has been planted on the bank of that mystic river

which the prophet saw, and because it drew from that its nourishment and strength.

Now, what the Gospel has done for the literature of our mother tongue, it will do for that of every land to which it is sent. I am not unmindful here of the immense literature of China; even that, however, will be purified and elevated, and more completely utilized, when the Gospel shall have pervaded the land in which it grew. But that, like everything about China, is an exceptional thing. For in the great majority of instances our modern missionaries have had to reduce languages to writing, and have given to the peoples among whom they labor their first specimens of literature in the shape of portions of the Word of God. What a wonderful part that book has played in the literature of nations! Luther's Bible first gave fixity to the language of the Fatherland. Calvin's writings about the Bible did more, perhaps, than most other things to mould the language of France, which was then in the process of formation, and the work of William Tyndale — for it is the aroma of his style that gives its fragrance to our English Bible — has given a standard to our noble tongue. Now just what Wicliffe and Tyndale have done for us, in this regard, our missionaries have done for more than one hundred and fifty different peoples, and who shall tell what the after results may be? Five hundred years ago, when Wicliffe was patiently writing out in his parsonage, on the banks of the Swift, his translation from the Vulgate, who could have foreseen that the literature he was then inaugurating would fill the libraries of England, America and Australia? And who shall conjecture what shall be in those newly written languages five hundred years hence? The other day, at the unveiling of the Livingstone statue, in Edinburgh, Moffat, his venerable father-in-law, said: "When Livingstone was led into the unknown regions of Africa, he had a future before him of which they had often spoken together. They had frequently talked with each other, when they imagined they could see vessels sailing on those magnificent lakes, and cities with churches rising on their shores." So I think our missionary brethren, when they see what the translation of the Bible has done for our language, may comfort themselves with the assurance that, as the centuries roll on, there shall spring up out of the work they have accomplished, literatures which shall do as much for other nations as that in our tongue has done for those to whom it is vernacu-

lar. Unknown indeed, and for the most part unnoticed, they are laboring now in far away lands; and when they return to the churches from which they went forth, there be those among us who sneeringly say, "It is only a missionary!" But in the coming time, they shall be named by the peoples at the birth of whose literatures they presided, with the reverence with which now we name Coverdale, Tyndale and Wicliffe, as men "the latchets of whose shoes we are not worthy to stoop down and unloose!"

IV. Look now, in the fourth place, at THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY UPON SCIENCE. It may seem a bold thing, if not a rash thing, for me at this particular time to attract attention to this aspect of the subject. I may be reminded of some recent utterances of physical philosophers, which virtually accuse the Christian religion of arresting the progress of science, and which have exalted Mohammedanism, so far as science is concerned, above the Gospel. But I would remind these friends that there is a wide difference between the syllabus and the New Testament, and I insist that the two shall not be confounded. I claim that here, as in other things, the religion of the Bible shall be tested, not by the utterances of individual men, or by the decrees of Popes or councils, but by its own book, and by its general tendency and influence, wherever it has been permitted freely to develop itself. Now look around you, and tell me where in the present day the physical sciences have made the greatest progress? Has it not been in those countries in which Protestant Christianity has taken the strongest hold? And am I not fairly entitled to ask, Is this by accident? Nay, when I find that in other departments Christianity has exerted a quickening influence, am I not warranted to conclude that the intellectual activity which it fosters, and the spirit of inquiry which it evokes, have told also on science, and so have contributed to the production of its present excellence?

Then, so far as the contrast with Mohammedanism is concerned, I may surely point to the fact that science is today, in Protestant lands, far ahead of what it is in Moslem countries. How comes it, then, that Islamism does not keep its preëminence, if it ever had it? The answer is easy. In past ages it was contending with a system of so-called Christianity which was virtually idolatry and polytheism, and so its faith in the one living God gave a vigor to the thinking of its disciples which could not

be imparted by the mummeries of mediæval Romanism. But now Christianity stands not upon the church, but upon the book. And how much that means may be seen at once, by contrasting the history of the Colonies of Spain, which carried the church with them, with that of those of England, which took with them the Bible. Its watchword is: "Prove all things, hold fast that which is good," and so, wherever the New Testament goes, it provokes inquiry, strengthens intellect, and encourages independence; while at the same time it imparts to the physical universe a sacred interest, as the work of Him who is "our Father." Christianity has reared the platform on which all scientific associations stand today, and the very liberty which men of science have to utter unpopular opinions (shall I say even heretical opinions?) has been won for them by Christian men. Had all the martyrs of Christianity, and especially of Protestantism, been as weak-spirited as Galileo, we might all have still been groaning under the intolerance of the Inquisition. But in standing up for liberty of conscience and of opinion for themselves, the witnesses for religious truth have secured also for science the right to hold and teach its own deductions and beliefs. Now that is indispensable to its advancement if not even to its existence, and so when you examine it thoroughly you will be constrained to admit that this mystic river has fertilized the roots of science also, and though for the moment there may seem to be a misunderstanding between some Christians and some men of science, for which, as it seems to me, both parties are to be blamed, yet the two departments never can really injure each other, and the advancement of the one will invariably be accompanied by the progress of the other.

Nor could we have a finer illustration of that fact, than in the services which our foreign missionaries have rendered to the science of our times. Their labors in ethnology, geography, philology, botany, zoölogy, and even astronomy, have called forth the thanks of men of the highest eminence in all these departments. Indeed, every mission station is in a sense also a scientific observatory, and the records there kept are preëminently valuable; for those who make them are educated men trained to habits of exactness, and interested in everything that will help on the work to which they have given their lives. Their science is a part of their religion, and so, as one of the incidental advantages of our missionary enterprise, we are laying annually at the feet

of our philosophers stores of facts which are of unspeakable value to them in their work. And this is only as it ought to be—for the Gospel which teaches men to follow truth at every hazard and above all things else, has nothing to fear from the discoveries of the physical philosopher, and every new triumph of science will in the end give a new impulse to spiritual religion.

V. I have left myself little time for examining THE INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY ON COMMERCE, but a regard to the interests committed to my advocacy to-night, leads me to ask your indulgence for a few moments longer, while I make one or two statements bearing on that department. From the day when Paul was carried in a corn ship from Melita to Puteoli, commerce and Christianity have been mutual helpers. Sometimes the trader has gone before the missionary and been the means of introducing him to the district; but wherever the missionary has settled and succeeded, he has by his very success given an impulse to commerce. Not only has he made it safe for the mariner to visit coasts where formerly every stranger would have been treacherously slain, but every Christianized heathen becomes a customer in the markets of our civilization. Thus the Christianization and civilization of the Sandwich Islands created a commerce which for the year ending 1871 amounted to \$4,406,426, which, reckoning the profit at 10 per cent., would leave a gain to those engaged in it of \$440,642, an amount about equal to the receipts of the American Board last year.

It has been calculated that for every pound sterling England expends in missions she receives ten in trade, and the same ratio will hold in the case of the United States. But that is a low and selfish view to take of the subject. Think of the effect which these commercial dealings must have on the communities among whom they are carried on. There is an elevating and a widening influence in buying and selling, and though it is doubtless true, that civilization carries its vices as well as its benefits in its train, yet wherever it is the result of missionary activity, the effects are of the happiest sort. The preachers of the Cross create an atmosphere around them which influences even those who are not converted by their agency; and the testimony borne by the Indian government, in the report laid before the House of Commons in 1873, would be confirmed in every mission field on the surface of the earth. It is to this effect: "The government of India cannot but acknowledge the great obligation under

which it is laid by the benevolent exertions of these six hundred missionaries, whose blameless example and self-denying labors are infusing new vigor into the stereotyped life of the great populations, and are preparing them to be in every way better men and better citizens of the great empire in which they dwell."

And now, let it be remembered that all these are but the incidental results of the spread of the Gospel. They spring from the fact that the converts to Christianity are regenerated in heart, and have been "called from darkness into the marvellous light" of the Gospel. There are at this moment, it is safe to say, two millions of living Christians, who, but for the labors of our missionaries, would have been idolators. And who can estimate the temporal and eternal bearings of that one fact? What a motive for thanksgiving it presents to those who are working in this great enterprise; what new energy and inspiration it gives to all who love the cause of our Lord Jesus Christ. Shall we then go back? Shall we, by our lack of liberality, so cripple the hands of our Prudential Committee that they must recall our brethren from the fields to which they have given their lives? Recall them? No! by the memory of those heroic men whose graves have consecrated all heathendom, and whose lives have given to this age a reproduction of apostolic Christianity; it cannot be. Recall them? No! by the debt we owe to our fellow men, for whom we have received the Gospel of the Christ in sacred trust, it must not be. Recall them? No! by the love we bear to the dear Lord we serve, and whose heart is yearning over the multitudes of those who are perishing from lack of knowledge, it shall not be! Let the stars be recalled from their stations in the midnight sky, sooner than let it be said that for lack of support we must bring back a brother from his field of labor. "SPEAK UNTO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL THAT THEY GO FORWARD." Be that the watchword of the week; and though a sea of difficulty lie before us, as we advance into it the waters will divide, and make a pathway for our passage!

A 33036

**THEOLOGY LIBRARY
CLAREMONT, CALIF.**

BV
2075
.T64

Taylor, William Mackergo, 1829-1895.

The influence of Christianity on human institutions and occupations : sermon preached at the sixty-seventh annual meeting of the American Board Commissioners for Foreign Missions. Hartford, Oct. 3, 1876 / by William Taylor. -- Boston : Printed by Thoma Todd, Congregational House, 1876.
17 p. ; 24 cm.

1. American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions. I. Title

A 33036

CCSC 04 OCT 79

4441967

CSTMxc

